

Vatanen was filed February 9, 2000, and published August 17, 2000. The priority date of October 1, 1999, of the present application predates both of these dates. Thus, Vatanen is not effective as prior art under any section of 35 U.S.C. §102, which also makes it ineffective as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Moreover, Applicants would also like to point out that under pre-November 29, 2000, 35 U.S.C. §102(e) ("old 102(e)"), which applies here, only a U.S. Patent may qualify as prior art. It is therefore improper to apply Vatanen, an International Publication, under old 102(e).

Since Vatanen is applied in the rejection of every claim, all the rejections are improper and should be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants consider the application to be in condition for allowance and respectfully request notice thereof at an early date. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed number if, in the Examiner's opinion, such a call would aid in the examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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